TL 4096

Parliament House
WELLINGTON

16 October 1986

Just arrived.

Correspondence with Helen Clark is provided for info please do not publish in media

Harry Bruhns
East Timor Independence Centre
PO Box 9716
WELLINGTON

Dear Harry

Thank you for your letter of 11 October concerning the amendments which I moved to the resolution on East Timor at the Labour Party Conference.

I think that we have a quite basic disagreement on the relationship between Labour Party conference remits and Labour Government policy. My objective is to get the conference to endorse a policy which the Government will implement. I can see little point in pursuing rhetorical remits which will simply be ignored. The amendments which were passed have every chance of being Government policy. They in no way put the Government in a weak position. They actually stand to strengthen Government policy on the matter.

I cannot understand why you have taken exception to the part of the amendment which calls for the Government to make representations to the Indonesian Government where evidence of human rights abuses exists. That amendment certainly does not imply that there are no violations of human rights occurring in East Timor. Its intent is to ensure that when such violations are brought to the attention of the New Zealand Government it should make representations to the Indonesian Government.

Overall, therefore, I cannot agree with your judgment that "the limited amount that New Zealand can do for East Timor has been lessened" as a result of the amendments. I think that the Party now has on the books a policy remit which it can expect to be implemented. Personally I regard that as progress.

Yours sincerely

Helen Clark

Helen Clark
MP for Mt Albert